GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:314
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2002
IMPORT OF G.M. SOYABEAN
KANTI SINGH;RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an indiscriminate import of genetically modified food especially soyabean in the country;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry has taken up this issue with the Ministry of Environment & Forests to curb such import; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFFERED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.314 DUE FOR REPLY ON 5TH AUGUST, 2002.

(a) to (c): The import of genetically modified products is governed by the Rules framed under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, which is handled by the Ministry of Environment & Forests. Rule 11 of the Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro-organisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms of Cells, 1989 notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, provides that food stuffs, ingredients in food stuffs and additives including processing aids containing or consisting of genetically engineered organisms or cells, shall not be produced, sold, imported or used except with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). There is no evidence of indiscriminate import of genetically modified food, especially soybean into the country. However, in the absence of an appropriate framework making it binding on importers to declare import of genetically modified foods, the possibility of genetically modified foods entering the country can not be ruled out totally. The Ministry of Agriculture had, therefore, requested the Ministry of Environment & Forests to issue a notification under the Environment (Protection) Act making it binding on importers to declare whether the commodity being imported is of GM or non-GM origin and in case it is of GM origin to obtain a necessary permit from the Ministry of Environment & Forests for its import.